

Portland, OR — Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) announced today that three Oregon veterans will receive medals earned during WWII and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Two of these veterans will receive the Purple Heart, and a third veteran will receive his European Campaign Medal. The awards will be presented during a ceremony on Wednesday, August 6th at 10:30 a.m. in Blumenauer's Portland office. Representatives from the Army and Navy will be on hand to help Blumenauer award the long-lost medals.

Vearl Varney of Sandy will receive the Purple Heart for injuries sustained when he was the pilot aboard a VP-22 aircraft during the Korean War. On a surveillance mission over the Strait of Formosa, his aircraft was hit by multiple rounds of anti-aircraft fire and crashed into the ocean. A PBM aircraft came to rescue the crew from the rough seas, but it broke apart upon takeoff. Half the members of each airplane's crew were killed. Varney was transferred shortly after the incident, in which he received multiple injuries, and he never received the Purple Heart, even though those serving with him did. Blumenauer helped him apply to receive the medal early this year. Although his initial request was denied, a second request was granted after affidavits were signed by three of his fellow crew members attesting to his actions. One of them, Roy Ludena of Sparks, Nevada, will attend the ceremony.

Gerald Wack of Northeast Portland will receive the Purple Heart for injuries received during a firefight in the Vietnam War. In the spring of 1968, Wack was hit when his unit was caught in a battle at landing zone, late at night. He was taken behind the lines, treated for four days, and then returned to the front. The incident left Wack deaf in his left ear. Wack will also receive the Air Medal and several campaign medals.

Jack Holt of Northeast Portland will receive the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three bronze service stars for his service as an infantryman in World War II. Holt is a previous recipient of the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

WHAT:

Medal Award Ceremony for Jack Holt, Vearl Varney, and Gerald Wack

WHEN:

10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, August 6th

WHERE: ☐ ☐ ☐

**729 NE Oregon
Portland**

**Office of Congressman Earl Blumenauer
Street, Suite 115**

